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**REMARKS BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
SOUTH ASIA WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP SYMPOSIUM
DINNER AND CULTURAL EVENING
RUPOSHI BANGLA HOTEL, DHAKA
DECEMBER 9, 2012**

Ms. Tauqeer Fatima Bhutto, Minister for Women Development, Pakistan

Ms. Mojgan Mostafavi, Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs, Afghanistan

Ms. Himali Jindasa, Advisor to the Hon. Minister, Ministry of Industry and Commerce,
Sri Lanka

Good friends Amb. Nasim Firdaus and Selima Ahmed

... and, most especially, wonderful delegates from across South and Central Asia

Good evening ...welcome ... I am so glad that you are here ... such a beautiful sight ...
women ... women entrepreneurs ... women who are determined to build better lives for
themselves, their families, their communities, their nations ... women ...

... but Mrs. Malick is not here this evening ... she sends her regrets ... she's sorry that she
couldn't come ... but she's OK with missing this symposium, because she knows that you are
here ... you are here representing her ... you are here representing Mrs. Malick and millions and
millions of other women entrepreneurs across Central Asia, across South Asia ... you are here...

Mrs. Malick lives in Jessore, in the southwest part of Bangladesh ... Mrs. Malick wants
to do more, Mrs. Malick wants to be more, Mrs. Malick wants more for her family ... Mrs.
Malick learned how to make urea fertilizer briquettes – called guti fertilizer here ... she took out
a loan, bought a machine to make these briquettes ... and she went into business making and
selling guti fertilizer to farmers of her community ... Mrs. Malick is a successful businesswoman
... she has paid off her loan, and now she is investing in her children ... her farmer neighbors
know they can count on Mrs. Malick to have the fertilizer available when they need it, at a fair
price ... they need Mrs. Malick; they rely on Mrs. Malick ... Mrs. Malick is a pillar of her
community, a woman of confidence, a woman who commands respect, a woman treasured and

valued by the men and women of her village ... a woman treasured and valued by the men and women of her village.

As I travel Bangladesh from one end of the nation to the other to make good on my promise to Bangladesh's president that I would visit each of his nation's 64 districts, I discover Mrs. Malicks everywhere I go ... the Mrs. Malick who set up a business to revive traditional weaving; the Mrs. Malick who took out a micro-loan to buy a single sewing machine and now has a small business with half a dozen machines offering jobs to women in her village; the Mrs. Malick who bought a cow and now owns a herd of cows that supplies fresh milk to her village; the Mrs. Malick who grew a single rented room for workers at a nearby factory into a large hostel for the workers; the Mrs. Malick who uses her laptop computer on her dining room table to do high-tech business. The list goes on and on ... Bangladesh is filled with Mrs. Malicks ...

This symposium is about Mrs. Malick, all the Mrs. Malicks of Central Asia, of South Asia, each of you is a Mrs. Malick ... you, too, did not know your place; you, too, wanted more ... more for yourself, your family, your community; you, too, defied the odds and through your own sweat became entrepreneurs ... businesswomen ... builders of families, of communities.

Four decades of work across South Asia – Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh – and across southern and central Africa have made clear to me one great lesson: women, women, women are not only the backbone of the family, not only the backbone of the community, they are, indeed, the backbone of the nation. Women, all the Mrs. Malicks, are the key to development. Since my first experience in the developing world in Nepal in 1970, I have seen over and over again that if you are serious about development, then you must be serious about working with women ... that's the bottom line: development is about women. ... and that is what this symposium is all about. Women, women/you – builders of family, women/you – builders of community, women/you – builders of nations, women entrepreneurs/you showing the way; this symposium is all about you ... and the millions of Mrs. Malicks whom you represent.

Your sessions today and your program tomorrow should help you develop the tools you need as you endeavor to deepen and broaden women entrepreneurship in your respective countries. The symposium is perhaps even more valuable in enabling you to meet and network with women like you ... other Mrs. Malicks from throughout the South and Central Asia. This network will enable you to share ideas, experiences; it will enable you to help each other identify

the richest opportunities while learning from each other's experiences so you can avoid repeating the same mistakes. This network can be your lifeline, your safety net, especially when you become discouraged by the many obstacles and challenges that block your way forward, that seek to put you back into your place.

I am pleased and proud that America, in close partnership with Bangladesh, is sponsoring this symposium to bring you together as representatives of all the Mrs. Malicks of the region. These Mrs. Malicks are women, women of courage as they challenge the norms that seek to deny them opportunity and growth; these women are women of determination as they endeavor to overcome all the odds; these women are women of hope as they undertake to build a better future for themselves and their families. All these women, all these Mrs. Malicks look to you for guidance, moral support, leadership.

I wish you well as this impressive symposium continues; I wish you well when you return to your homes and renew your efforts to unleash the power, the energy, the dynamism, the creativity, the entrepreneurial skills of the women of your home country. Development, as I noted earlier, is about women. And you will leave this symposium better prepared than ever to help women use their skills and talents to become entrepreneurs. I can think of no better gift that you can give the people of your nation. You should be so proud.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*

GR/ 2012